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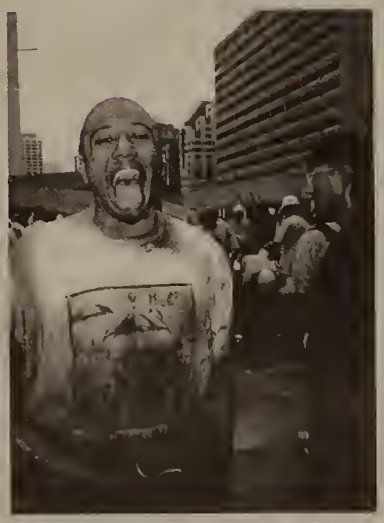
"I should have been an Indy." – Matt Lenner, Comp 0T0 and SAC Prez

the cannon

September 29, 1999

The official newspaper of the University of Toronto Engineering Society — Volume XVII Issue II

F!rosh Week Mayhem



(Left) Struan says hi. (Right) F!rosh and F!rosh leeduers alike take the plunge in the fountain at Nathan Phillips Square
For further examples of the havoc resulting from F!rosh Week, turn to pages 4 and 5.

Thanks for coming out, says Tim

Looking back at the madness that was F!rosh Orientation 9T9

by Tim Christie — Orientation Chair

As the last ~~stolen~~ items were brought in for Scavenger Hunt in the small hours of the morning on September 11th, Orientation 9T9 was finally over. It consumed my summer, but it was well worth it. This article is mainly to thank everyone who helped out. I really couldn't have done it by myself.

The people who really deserve the thanks are the F!rosh who came out to the events during the week. Hopefully everyone had a good time, and from the F!rosh I spoke to throughout the week, that seemed to be the case.

There were no major incidents (meaning I didn't get arrested), and most of the events went off without a hitch. We had a record number of people come out to Hart House Farm, and overall our numbers were up for nearly every event.

F!rosh Nite was a huge success, with over 1500 people through the doors. I know that this number of people probably had something to do with the, shall we say - tropical - heat conditions in the building, but I think it was worth it. Drinks were cheap, and the bar sales reflected that.

Before I close the books on Orientation 9T9, there are lots of people I need to thank. There's no way I'd be able to list them all here, but I'll try my best. In no particular order, the subcommittee chairs were:

Vice Chairs: Karen Caputo, Chris Peressotti
F!rosh Handbook: Paul Graham, Erika Kiessner
Coveralls/T-Shirts: Matt Tully
Arm Dying: Chris Davis
Charity: Chris Peers, Melissa Nowicki
Scavenger Hunt: Chris Davis, Struan Vaz
Skule Patrol: Elliott Terner
Hart House Farm: Ken McNeil, Rahim Addetia
F!rosh Picture: Tim Hong
Front Door: Wilfred Lam
Posters: Cindy Wong
F!rosh Leaders: Andrew Hawkins, Mark Jaggassar
TPT: Dan Siegal, Vinder Sodhi
Fake F!rosh: Geoff Masotti, Phil Ng
F!rosh Kits: Tiffany Conroy
Food: Eric Tang, Vivian Woo
Website: Ian "Small Shirt" Roberts
F!rosh Olympics: Magda Wierus

I'd also like to thank Sean Voskamp, our Eng Soc Prez, John Wheeler, our Office Manager, Dean Charles, Vice Dean Cluett, Assistant Dean McGrath, Pierina Fillipone in the Registrar's Office, Andrea Charlesworth and Deirdre Stanton in the High School Liaison Office, Chris Peressotti and Leslie Ferguson with the LGMB, the Chief Attiliator and his crew, and last but definitely not least, our wonderful sponsors.

One last note to all you F!rosh: I saw a lot of spirit and enthusiasm throughout F!rosh Week, and so far I've been really impressed by the class of 0T3. Now, you need to channel all that keen F!rosh energy to other Skule™ events. Get involved with the Engineering Society and all it has to offer you. Skule™ Nite is coming up, there are always BNAD events going on, the Homecoming Float needs to be built soon, there's SUDS every Friday, and Oktoberfest looms on the horizon. Don't spend ALL your time looking at books, or you'll miss the real Skule™ experience. To quote my personal hero, Ferris Bueller, "Life moves pretty fast—if you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

Strong Engineering Presence at Education Fair

by Marcus Lam — Staff Reporter

The Education Fair was held at the Metro Convention Centre during September 17-19 this year. This annual event provided an excellent opportunity for high school students, mostly graduating, to explore the features of all universities and various colleges in Ontario.

As usual, U of T had a commanding presence at the fair. A huge round information desk was set at the centre of our square-shaped booth from which four separate smaller booths branched out. The four booths each represented a different faculty or campus of the university: the Faculty of Arts and Science, the Faculty of Music, the Mississauga and Scarborough campuses and the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering.

It came as no surprise that the Engineering booth showed the most spirit. While many of our university's representatives wore white T-shirts, some of our engineering students were dressed in coveralls and decorated hard hats. It served as a great attention-grabber since no other universities (as far as I could see anyway) had engineering students in their traditional coverall-hard hat attire.

After three days of handing out information booklets and (the somewhat tacky) U of T tattoos, the event proved to be a major success. The university and our faculty gained a lot of exposure to potential engineering applicants.

A special thanks goes to all the staff and student volunteers who supported the event. If you're interested in helping out with future recruitment/orientation sessions (like F!rosh for a Day, Engineering Open House), feel free to email the High School Liaison Committee at highschool@skule.ca.

"Where's my free pen?" Mob scene at the Career fair. Looking for employment? Thinking about PEY? Turn to page 7.

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letters & opinions

the cannon

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PLEASE NOTE
the cannon is a medium through which undergraduate engineering students can express their opinions. The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editors or the Engineering Society unless so indicated.

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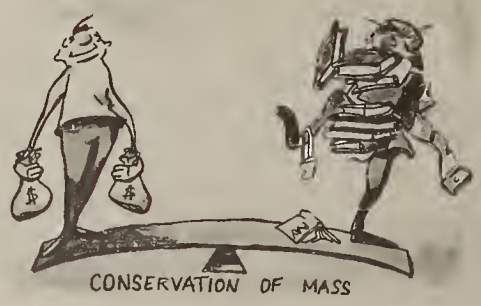


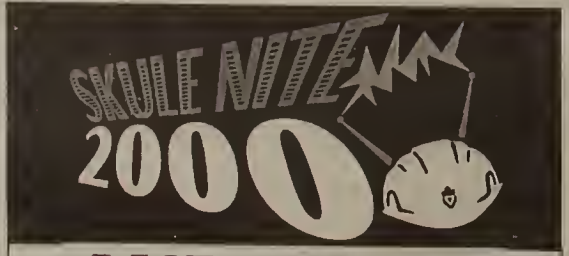
editorial

Skule™ is big enough that it is difficult to talk about common goals. We are, after all, a group of people made up of students and staff, grads and undergrads, professors and a large miscellany of people who are somehow associated with engineering. Almost (not quite) like an airport, the engineering community contains a group of people who are only here for a bit, whose lives are not tied to these walls.

This impressed itself upon me while we put together this issue of the Cannon. We students are often busy pursuing our interests (and rightly so), working towards that personal goal, that we come and go without having taken a good look at the system that exists here to educate us.

But why stop? Why look? Stopping and looking almost always makes a difference to how the system works for us. We could talk to Seema at the employment office about your career hopes or give our TA feedback about how he/she is doing. We could take a particularly difficult professor aside and remind him that we haven't taken circuits since 2nd year. We could give the Engineering Society brilliant ideas about keeping the couch area clean.

I am big on negative feedback loops. (For instance, we can provide the faculty with the feedback that it matters that our teaching assistants have the ability to communicate complex concepts; that it matters that the ratio between students and teaching assistants not be ridiculously high. Systems in place that provide training and that deal with the increasing ratios will not withstand Skule™'s inevitable increase in enrolment.)



AUDITIONS
(and tech sign-ups)
November 3-6
email skulenite@skule.ca for more info

Message from the Chair of First Year

PROF. WILL CLUETT — VICE-DEAN

Welcome again to all incoming First Year students. The term is underway and I hope you are adjusting well to your new schedules. I have checked with the Engineering Computing Facility (ECF) to see how many of you have accessed your ECF accounts and e-mail addresses. So far, 823 First Year students out of approximately 960 registered have done so. I would encourage the remaining 100+ students to do this ASAP because I would like to be able to communicate with you via e-mail in the future. You should have received instructions on how to access your accounts in the August mailing. If you did not receive these instructions or have misplaced them, please see Rosemary Guido in the First Year Office.

Vice-Dean Cluett preparing for launch. It's amazing what you can accomplish when several hundred people are yelling out orders...

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

MIE Open House
October 15-16

Get a free lunch and free tshirt!

email chenl@mie.utoronto.ca

In memory of
Professor L.E. Jones

A memorial service for Professor Jones will be held on October 16 at 2 p.m. in Convocation Hall.

A Tale of Two (Undergrad) TAs

THRESHOLDS: THE SECOND IN A SERIES EXAMINING OUR FACULTY AT THE EDGE OF A MILLENNIUM

BY JEAN CRUZ

When I stop to remember the things I have learned over the past few years, I realize that most of them were due to the help of friendly people in the common room. Sometimes, they were people in my class. Other times, they were seniors (seniors never seem to have any classes). Always, they were undergrads.

One could look at the concept of undergraduate teaching assistants (TAs) as an obvious extension of the successful concept of peer helping. In fact, in the last few years, undergrads TA-ing undergrads has become less and less unusual. Many around our Faculty have strong opinions about this phenomenon. For instance, the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering believes that part-time employment (like TA-ing) can be detrimental to a full-time student's academic career. To Eitan Bonderover and Terry Borer—both fourth year Engineering Science students and teaching assistants—it's a way to earn a bit of money, get valuable experience, and a way to give something back.

Eitan Bonderover looks quite at ease explaining first year linear algebra to a small crowd of frosh. He should be—he's been helping people out with various things since he was in first year (He helped me with circuits). But now, the Division of Engineering Science pays him for it.

The Division of Engineering Science has hired a small group of seniors to help incoming OT3s with things such as UNIX, programming and linear algebra. "It's specifically aimed towards frosh that come from places that provide less of a math background than Ontario." Next semester, Eitan will be officially tutoring CSC190 and 191, Data Structures and Algorithms.

"The strange thing is," he smiles. "After this course, these guys will know just as much algebra as I know." He believes that it helps that he can explains things clearly, that knowing the material is only part of the battle. "I can speak English, too."

"Terry did WHAT?" was my first reaction to news that Terry Borer taught the first two weeks of CSC180, Introduction to Computer Programming, a course which he TAs. "Professor Hehner was away for a conference in Europe." Initially, a senior grad student was going to lecture in Professor Hehner's absence. The responsibility was ultimately offered to Terry, who is thinking about one day becoming a professor himself.

"I don't know of any undergrads teaching courses. It's pretty unusual," Terry admits. The experience has given him a perspective on the amount of work it takes to run a lecture successfully. "I tried to always come prepared. People ask many questions, and the class almost runs itself." He found it an interesting challenge to decide on a pace for the lectures, realizing that whichever pace he chose was either too fast or too slow for someone in the class. Since "many people in the class had never had experience with computers before," he decided on a slower pace. "People seemed to like it."

Both Eitan and Terry believe that having taken these courses recently is the advantage of an undergraduate teaching assistant over their graduate counterparts. Clearly, much of the success of the Division of Engineering Science's peer-tutor project is due to the fact that the students whom they hire have recently taken the courses that they are tutoring, and with the same professor. "We know where they are coming from," says Eitan. "We also know what the professor expects. It wasn't that long ago when we were in their shoes."

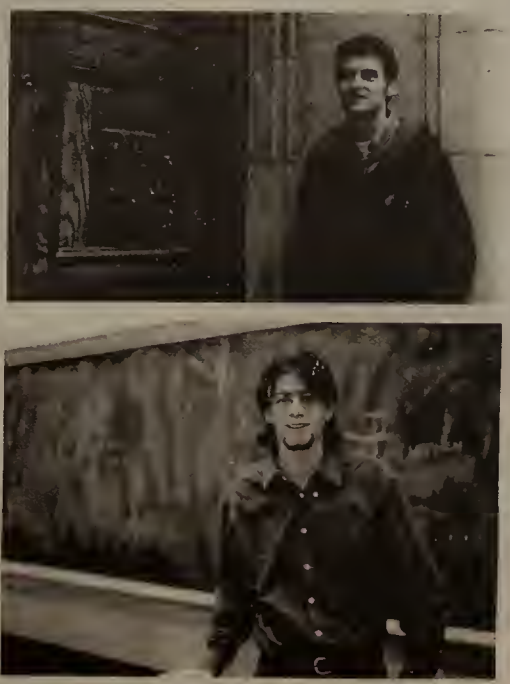
Another advantage is the regular contact with the students. "I'm always on duty," smiles Terry. He says that seeing the students in the common room creates a better rapport. It is also a great way to get the feedback that a TA needs in order to improve. This feedback provides them with a greater sensitivity that serves to tailor a session to the needs of a group.

All of which is not to say that undergraduate TA-ing is without its disadvantages. Marking fairly and providing feedback on coursework is essential. Since undergrads are usually TA-ing for the first time, many lack the experience of their graduate counterparts. Conflicts of interest are a potential issue that professors carefully take into consideration. Undergrads are also only allowed to TA one course, so that their TA duties don't disrupt their scheduled courses (However, it has been noted that the lack of communication between some departments makes it possible to be hired by two different departments).

Other issues with regards to undergraduate TAs affect graduate TAs as well. The White Paper (a document compiled by student Paul Leventis on student concerns) lists some observations and recommendations regarding the TA situation here in Engineering. In particular, it talks about the need for more training, as well as a functional feedback system. As it stands, each department must provide all their hired TAs with training. This has been mandatory for at least five years. Many departments provide a TA booklet, which provides tips and guidance. "I didn't get a copy," Terry admits.

Are these things adequate? Without a functional feedback system, it's difficult to tell. There are only student memories to serve as a sketchy picture of the general quality of TAs. With all the lunchtime rants and horror stories about useless TAs, it's difficult to be hopeful. Terry thinks that there's just too many things involved behind TA hiring and training. The situation seems bleak.

see HIRE page 6



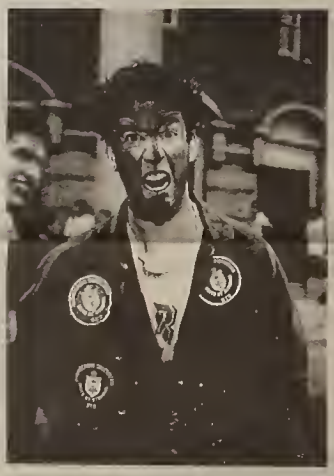
(Top) Eitan Bonderover is a fourth year EngSci who has been hired by the Division of Engineering Science to help frosh with linear algebra. Next semester he is TA-ing CSC190 and CSC191. (Bottom) Terry Borer is also a fourth year EngSci. Recently he had the opportunity to lecture for the first two weeks of CSC180.

Teresa's Tantrum

BY TERESA HUANG

Working in the real world is amusing. Especially in the complex corporate environment. It isn't exactly my natural habitat. Hopefully my days here aren't numbered. The past 4 months have been rather educational. For one thing, I've learned to be a little more diplomatic. When working with a contractor, hereafter referred to as the Synergy guy due to his propensity towards large management terminology, one should refrain from bashing his head against one's notebook computer. It could damage the notebook. Sarcasm should be used very lightly in meetings. Asking a senior person if he reads Dilbert, and then say "That's evident." upon hearing "No." as the answer, is not a good idea. Here are some personal guidelines for corporate survival: Communication is the key: Saying "This idea sucks." Is not going to impress anyone in the meeting. The right way to say it is "At the end of the day, this game plan is not a strategic fit for the this result-driven core business, the best practice has to be proactive not reactive, we must think outside the box in order to be the movers and shakers in this knowledge base client-focused mindset. The bottom line is that we have to move the goal posts and see the big picture to deliver value-added services and stretch the envelope to go the extra mile. The paradigm shift will have a synergetic knock-on effect and produce a win-win situation." Have fun with fellow co-workers: Just because the business guy besides your cube calls help desk every time his browser can't access an URL is no reason to lose respect for him. What you should be asking yourself, is why did you have respect for him in the first place?! People are amusing. Run human experiments if work becomes too mundane. I've noticed that in the bathroom, us proper young ladies being proper young ladies, will sit in the stall and wait for people to leave if we suspect that our activities might compromise our apparent gentility. Once I was in the bathroom and for some peculiar reason an entire herd of us delicate ladies came streaming into the bathroom, occupying all the stalls. I then noticed that I don't hear anything. Not even the normal expected umm.. fluid sounds. So I concluded that this must be a waiting game. Reminded me of the dining philosophers' problem, although I assure you that nobody was dining. So I decided to sit and wait and see if people would leave and gratuitously flush. Or umm.. lose the battle. Eventually 2 people left. However, I was starting to feel too much like a freak to sustain my experiment that unfortunately I did not stay to find out the final results. Beware of fancy business-generating strategies: While visiting another building this summer, I learned a valuable lesson. Generating revenue is important to big businesses. My astute observation has lead me to discover a strategic advantage of this other building over my own. See, in order to attract potential clients and impress them to utilise our supreme abilities in financing their other revenue generating businesses, it is universally agreed that the bathrooms in the building must be more luxurious than the average home. Forget about the homeless people around the corner begging for loose change to have a meal, luxurious bathrooms with high tech sensors and floodlights and exotic granitic floors are necessities. The automatic flush sensors are rather disconcerting for short people like myself though. You move out of the way of the sensors and flushing occurs. The average flush rate is about 3 times per usage. More if you are squeamish. These bouts of flushing can be very startling. The engineer in me thinks they should be equipped with voice warning messages. Enough guidelines for now and I better get back to work. I'll touch base with all you later.

September has come to a close. Has it already been a month since we first welcomed the Class of ØT3 into the hallowed halls of Skule™? Finally, the various crevices of our bodies have regained their natural colour. So... who else is three weeks behind on Skule™work? -



Orientation 9T9

Sizzling like bacon at (water)gunpoint... Purple-stained bodies and purple-stained streets... Hordes of yellow-clad university students bringing downtown traffic to a standstill... Innocent passers-by jumping up and down just 'cause we told 'em to... Paying homage to Gumby and Godiva... Testing the waters at Nathan Phillips Square...

How was YOUR F!rosh Week?

"WHO ARE WE?!" ...F!ROSH! —— f!rosh week from a f!rosh perspective

BY CHRISTOPHER MAR — STAFF REPORTER

It was the best of times;
It was the worst of times.
It was an age of discovery;
It was an age of foolishness.
It was an epoch of inheriting an identity;
It was an epoch of casting away past and forgotten identities.
It dawned with the advent of countless drunken orgies of hysteria (drunken with sensations of joy and belonging, that is), and consequently,
It adjourned in the inevitable confrontation with the morning after (neither sexual connotations nor reference to alcoholic BEvERages nor a combination of both, intended).

F!rosh Week. As high-schoolers, these two words were enough to rouse-up a myriad of emotions. The fear of being subjected to a host of humiliating initiation activities. The excitement of anticipating the beginning of a new chapter in life. The pride of being intimately associated with a community in which diversity among individuals only strengthens its commonality.

F!rosh Week was a culmination of all of the above. A perfect balance between organized mayhem and mayhem. Chanting cheers, submerging completely in purple dye (that stuff still hasn't come off!), writing the TPT (I'm quite proud of my essay on Arctic toad infestations), NOT writing the EPT, believing (with a passion) that 'that group sucks' because they just do, parading down Yonge Street amid an army of yellow hard hats, creating havoc in the Eaton Centre, transforming City Hall into nothing less than a water playground, exercising the power of the masses by commanding the sound of a car horn at will or making the poor soul in the display window at Eaton Centre to jump up and down—these things together made Frosh Week an amazing experience...on the surface.

On the surface? No, I'm not alluding to the perpetual flow of BEvERages in the Atrium, or the Frosh 'activities' organized by the non-existent, wholly denied Brute Force Committee (where did those cement hard hats come from, anyway?), or any other underground events. Frosh week embodies not only the crazy wackiness memorable to all, but more importantly, it demonstrates the spirit that lays at the foundation of Engineering—pride. This pride within the Engineering community is rooted deeply in tradition. Yet simultaneously, we are taught a practice of constant change and evolution. These two facets—tradition and change—are what separate the Skule™ of Engineering from all other faculties. Nowhere else was this more evident than that displayed by the interactions between the frosh leaders and the frosh.

Special thanks must be given to Tim Christie, the Frosh Week coordinator, Professor Will Cluett, the Vice-Dean of Engineering, the administration, and the Lady Godiva Memorial Band, who always seemed to appear at the most appropriate times. But most importantly, thanks must be given to the F!rosh of 0T3 (no one comes close to EngSci2) for making the effort all worthwhile.

Leading an active lifestyle as an Engineering student

BY HEBA CHEHADE

With the new millennium approaching, the fitness industry is now geared towards promoting active, healthy lifestyles for everyone. With a hectic class schedule, assignments, problem sets, presentations, and all the other worries of a university education, this goal is almost impossible for a student. This is especially true in Engineering where classes usually run from nine to five most days of the week, including LONG hours in the computer lab. Unless you are involved in a Varsity sport or motivated to participate in intramurals, the onus is on YOU to stay active during the school year. In addition to that, our modern lifestyles and conveniences have made us sedentary (passive), which is harmful to our health.

How can you start? First and foremost, you have to WANT to change. Write your goal down and be as specific and as detailed as possible. Write down all the reasons why this goal is important to you. Start out with a calendar to plan the activities that you intend to do for the week. More specifically, detail a goal for each day. The importance of this step lies in the identification of any hurdles that you may encounter: class schedules, quizzes, group meetings, etc. Remember that it is YOU who will have to achieve these goals, so choose them during time slots to which you know you will be able to commit.

Physical activity does not have to be very difficult. You can always build these into your daily routine. - Walk whenever you can. Get off the bus early or use the stairs instead of the elevator to take those extra few steps. - In between classes, always opt for a brisk walk to class as opposed to the relaxed "don't really want to go to class" style. - If you have a two or three hour lecture, stretch or walk to the cafeteria for some juice. This little bit of physical activity serves as a good wake-up call too. If your professor does not give the class a break in between the lectures, ask for one. - Walk around campus at lunchtime. Start out with a 10 minute walk and gradually increase the intensity and distance with time. - Look into what the Athletic Centre and/or the Hart House have to offer. There are always free drop-in fitness classes ranging between 7 am to 8 pm. Find out what is suitable for you: lunch time? After class? First thing in the morning? - The over-use of the facilities at the AC and the HH is a big problem we face. To overcome this problem, find out what time is convenient for you. In my opinion, it is best to work out (weights) either early in the morning or later in the evening.

Leading an active lifestyle, even though you have to make the time for it, has a lot of benefits that will make a positive impact in your everyday life as a university student:

- Better health - Improved fitness - Better posture and balance - Better self-esteem - Stronger muscles and bones - Feeling more energetic - Relaxation and reduced stress

Below is a guide to the average amount of exercise that a person needs to do in order to enjoy the benefits of an active lifestyle:

Endurance: 3-4 days a week of continuous cardiovascular activities, e.g. running, skating Flexibility: 2-3 days a week of stretching and bending, e.g. yoga, dance Strength: 3-4 days a week of activities against resistance, e.g. climbing stairs, weight training, carrying a backpack while walking briskly

Remember that starting out can be tough, so start out with 10 minutes of exercise and increase as time progresses. You can tell that you need to change the intensity of your exercise when you are able to do the whole exercise comfortably without it being challenging - your body plateaus. You should be exercising at a pace that requires some hard work while allowing you to maintain a conversation.

Try fitting an active lifestyle into your hectic schedules. Just remember that it may be one of the best decisions that you'll ever make in your life. Good luck!

Look out for more "Fitness in Engineering" articles coming your way.

"Hire more professors"

continued from page 3

Solutions? "I'd hire more professors, if I could change anything," says Terry. Some people say that there needs to be even more training. Some people would have TAs take part in one of the countless language and communication workshops available on campus. Others think that professors need to keep a closer eye on the TAs that they supervise.

There's not enough time. There's not enough money. Age-old laments echo through the hallways as I trudge towards the common room, another impossible problem set in hand. I would love to graduate with many wonderful memories of useful tutorials. I do have a few. Terry and Eitan will graduate with more than memories. They both will have been on the other side—and are now armed with essential teaching experience. "It's a great way to learn."

Consequently, I still have a problem set in hand that I don't understand. Maybe there are people in the common room.

Thanks for the amazing turnout at sign-ups this year! As the season progresses, keep reading the Cannon for team updates and writeups.

– EAA SPORTS

Professor Molly Shoichet: A rich and multi-faceted life

Professor Molly Shoichet and her son Emerson

BY VERA KAN

(This wonderful profile was written for last year's final Cannon, but due to circumstances, did not make it in. Here it is for you to enjoy. -ed.)

Professor Molly Shoichet is an assistant professor to the Department of Chemical Engineering, with a cross-appointment to the Department of Chemistry. A primary research area she has delved into is nerve regeneration, still in its theoretical stages, whereby nerves could be encouraged to regrow through the interior of a cellular-sized, drug-and-protein-filled polymer tube. Tissue engineering, polymer science, and drug delivery are her other main research interests. Chemical engineering principles are being applied to a medical need, resulting in cross-discipline cooperation from biologists and chemists.

The career path of Prof. Shoichet is particularly relevant to many of our readers because Prof. Shoichet was potentially part of the "brain drain" of educated Canadians who go down to the U.S. for careers and further education. Prof. Shoichet, raised in Toronto, excelled at the Toronto French School during her high school years, and went to M.I.T. for her undergraduate degree in chemical engineering. She then went to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst for her Master's and Ph.D. degrees in the same field. She spent three years at Cytotherapeutics, a high-tech company in Providence, Rhode Island, researching encapsulated cell theory. (Encapsulated cell theory deals with using living cells to produce the right amount of drugs within the human body, particularly for neurological diseases like Parkinson's disease.)

Prof. Shoichet might well have remained in the U.S.A., where she also met her husband, to pursue a research career in industry. Instead, opportunity beckoned, and she bucked the brain-drain flow, going from industry to academia, and from the U.S.A. to Canada. The NSERC Women's Faculty Award is meant to encourage engineering and science faculties in Canada to hire women, helping the new faculty member get established in global and local research, by paying a part of the salary and reducing the teaching load. Prof. Shoichet was the recipient of the 1995 award tenable for four or five years. In Toronto she has found encouragement from senior research staff, a more amenable urban life, proximity to her extended family and a cross-appointment to the Department of Chemistry.

When I asked Prof. Shoichet how this career move meshed with her spouse's career, she said, "We made a deal!" The deal was: the last career move was made by her husband to Rhode Island, where he has family, so the next career move would be (and was) made by her. Given that most Cannon readers will go on to form dual-professional career families, I thought this was a rather unusual and (hopefully) fair way of resolving future career conflicts. However, if Prof. Shoichet is successful in receiving tenure next year this career move will be likely permanent—so much for further exercising of the deal!

In describing how she conducts research, Prof. Shoichet compared it strongly to running a business—a rare and surprising observation when most researchers don't receive much of a business education while working through their degrees! Like any other professor she is responsible for bringing in grant money to keep her research labs and assistants funded. She "sells" her research ideas to granting agencies, who will look for the value of the research, the ability of the researcher to complete the work, the progress of work, any publications made, and conference attendance. She "sells" her research to the global and local research community, who may critique her work. She "sells" her research to the general public to heighten awareness of what she is trying to accomplish, and also to save other researchers time lost in unknowingly repeating work she has already done. Finally there is the management of her own time, her research assistants and students, and the resources needed to get the work done.

An amusing conversation grew as we discussed teaching in front of a classroom. Prof. Shoichet likes to teach, and for most undergrad students they see her solely as an instructor. I asked her how she handled "the problem students" but she said there were very few, and most could be handled by a threat to kick them out of class. (She has yet to kick anyone out of class.)

Far more of a problem are the distractions. "Students don't realize that we as professors can see everything. We can see if they're chatting to the person next to them, if they're eating or drinking, or if they fall asleep. One time I saw a student pull out a bag of carrots and start munching on them while I was teaching. I had to really concentrate because I like carrots and watching him I thought, hmmm... I want some too!" She describes the big challenge as "keeping the lecture interesting" whether by changing the pace or getting students to participate. As a stu-

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Overwound? Not enough time to run around and tend to your future? If you're not, the Cannon Staff was sent forth to collect some thing for you that are...

good to know

Health and Dental Plan Opt-Out

BY IVEY CHIU — STAFF REPORTER

Did you know that every full-time undergraduate student at the University of Toronto has paid $123.12 for a Health and Dental Plan? This fee was collected in the incidental fees portion of the total tuition amount.

While health coverage is a must, and dental coverage is advised, those students already covered under a similar plan (through parents or employer) may fill out an opt-out form to request a refund. Proof of similar coverage must be provided to opt-out of the health plan, but no proof of coverage is required to opt-out of the dental plan. The refund amounts are $45.60 and $77.52 respectively, and $123.12 combined. The submission deadline for the opt-out application is October 15, 1999.

The opt-out application can be obtained at the various SAC offices. The St. George SAC office is located at 12 Hart House Circle and can be reached at (416) 978-4911.

Setting Up Your New ECF Website is as Easy as One...

BY DAVID REBELLO — STAFF REPORTER

Step 1: At the unix prompt, type wwwinit. This command will execute a script that creates a bunch of links and directories, as well as entries in the ecf webserver that allow you to have your own webpage. The initial page is of course, a rather dismal personal webpage but with a bit of time and some clever copying and pasting you can begin taking over the world! (ahem) The fastest way to learn how is to ask someone. A close second to asking is copying. Save the various files of someone's webpage into the directory called public_html (Well it's a link to a directory actually but it shouldn't affect you). Then you can fool around with the pages and see what happens. To see your work point your browser to **http://www.ecf.utoronto.ca/~yourlogin/index.html** and let the fun begin. A few headaches are involved in terms of making the files public on ecf (so that anyone may read them). Go to the directory and type chmod 604 *

This will make all the files accessible to anyone on the net. But if you copied them from a webpage they were probably public to start with.

Thinking about going on PEY?

BY JORDAN MELZER — STAFF REPORTER

Sick of school? Looking for a change? Low on money? Looking for some extra cash? (Wanting to get real experience to get you started on that career path? -ed.) The Professional Experience Year—one-time, 12-16 month paid internship—could be your yellow cheat-sheet of happiness.

PEY is open to Canadian and landed immigrant students (or reasonable hand-drawn facsimiles) who have completed two to three years of Skule™, Computer Science, or Commerce with at least a 65% average (A 2.0 GPA, that's 1.0 for each neuron).

To pick up the official PEY student guide, visit the PEY office located in SFB740. There, you'll find kind PEY officers who recruit companies, manage applications, and smooth over relations between current PEYers and their companies. You will need to interview with Lisa Simpson, the office manager, before you can apply. And, you'll probably want to do this before the PEY office becomes a mob scene (early December).

There are two rounds of applications—one beginning in October and the other in February. During each, job descriptions will be posted outside the PEY office. At that time, job applications may be submitted through a standardized form and interviews will be scheduled with company representatives. Employment positions will then be offered after this process.

If that $40 OSAP loan doesn't look like it'll get you through next year, maybe you should think seriously about PEY. Hey, you're here because you want a job, aren't you?

Interested in joining the GradBall OTO Committee?

email Heba at fourthyear@skule.ca

(even if you've previously signed up for Fourth Year Committee)

The Early Bird Summer Employment for Engineers

BY JOHN MOORES — STAFF REPORTER

It's still September in the city of Toronto. Most of the trees are just beginning to turn and it's still possible to wear a t-shirt and sandals while commuting to and from classes. It might seem strange, then, to start worrying or to even contemplate a summer job for 2000. After all, it's been only four short weeks since the last summer ended. Despite this, (while it is possible to wait until as late as March) according to Employment Centre Counsellor Seema Opal, it is possible that many of the choice opportunities may have already disappeared.

Two notable employers, Microsoft and the National Research Council, are already holding hiring proceedings this fall to discover potential employees on-campus. In fact, in Microsoft's case the deadline for résumé submissions is at noon on September 29th. As for the latter, "The NRC has posted with us and is hosting an information session." reports Miss Opal.

There is no need for panic just yet. "The majority of postings start coming in January" assures Miss Opal, however, "You should begin to prepare now as opposed to January; before the work load gets to be too much."

The question remains, then, what is an enterprising engineer to do? The Career office web site located at www.career.skule.ca is a good starting point. A list of upcoming events (at the time this article was written, none were yet posted on the web) is available on the web site, as are a number of aids on such necessities as resume writing, interviewing and so forth. As well, a completed résumé can be posted electronically. This database is searchable by prospective employers.

There are additional services being planned to help searching undergrads. "We're also going to put on a summer job search survey." revealed Miss Opal, "We're going to ask students who bad summer jobs last year to provide some information on how they liked their job, how they found the work as well as contact information." This information will then be placed into a database which this year's students can use to create contact lists.

A question which may come to mind for some engineers, especially those who have come from away is whether or not there are any contacts for summer jobs available outside of the Metro area. While Miss Opal concedes that the majority of summer jobs accessible through the Career Office are within the Toronto area, "we also have some employers looking for students in the Ottawa area... particularly the NRC and many high-tech firms."

However, the opportunities are not confined to Canada. "We do have some US employers, such as Microsoft, looking for summer students... I think it's likely that the number of US employers looking for summer students will increase because of our marketing and because there are a number of PEY opportunities based in the States and companies are getting a very good sense of where students are." affirms Miss Opal.

Many events are ongoing. "There are a lot of information sessions happening... the Engineering Career Office is putting on a number of professional development seminars. Various clubs and associations are hosting networking events. Start attending these events... learn how experienced engineers have gotten where they've gotten... meet people and feel comfortable about selling yourself and about talking to employers" advises Miss Opal.

Right now is the time to start thinking about where you want to be. If you don't know what companies hire from your particular field or haven't pinned down exactly what it is you're looking for, all this information is available from the Career Office web site or by visiting the Career Office in the basement of the Sandford Fleming Building.

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Hart House, A Home Away from Home

BY IVEY CHIU — STAFF REPORTER

If you're looking for something a little different or even just a place to hang out, then you should check out Hart House. Hart House is a student recreational centre run by, and for, students. It is home to over 30 clubs and committees including the Library Committee, the Bridge Club, the Revolver Club and the Film Board. You can also find a full complement of musical ensembles such as Hart House Symphonic Band, Chorus, Orchestra, Singers, Chamber Strings and Jazz Band. Hart House also houses full athletic facilities and offers various athletic programs for an additional fee.

When not involved with a club, committee or athletics, you can take advantage of the two restaurants, barbershop, and various common/reading rooms at Hart House.

Hart House is an ivy-covered Gothic style building located at the north end of St. George Campus. Named after Hart Massey, it was donated to the University of Toronto for student recreational use. This year, Hart House celebrates its 80th birthday as a student recreational centre.

For a clubs, committees, facilities and athletics guide, visit Hart House at 7 Hart House Circle or online at www.utoronto.ca/harthouse. Telephone inquiries can be made at (416) 978-2452.

TO GA! TO GA! TO GA! Come out to this Friday's SUDS — we're going on an educational tour of Amsterdam Breweries.

Professor Shoichet

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dent, she did not expect to learn as much in class as from her books, but she hopes to change such perceptions with her own students.

I asked her about the sleepers in class since, I should admit, I fell asleep about once a day in class last year. Prof. Shoichet said it was hard not to take it personally, but she tries to let it go. (My apologies to all the civil profs for the last three years...)

Things are looking up for Prof. Shoichet and I hope that they continue to do so. For now, she works and looks forward to her tenure review, to playing with her son at the end of each day, and to discovering the personality of the next class of Chem eng students she will teach. Chem eng students are certainly lucky as they can look forward to being taught by Prof. Shoichet!

The Trouble with Being PC

BY SUSMITA DE — STAFF REPORTER

Okay, I'll admit it. When the Politically Correct boat came around a few years back, I jumped on with full force. I denied that I was clumsy, but simply "uniquely coordinated". I declared myself vertically challenged and was proud of it.

I spelled woman with a "y" (because of course, woMAN meant 'wife of man' and being the strong independent *womyn* I was at age 15, I was to be defined by my own self-worth... and plus, I wasn't married). I challenged all those who dared to define 'womyn' as either "Miss" or "Mrs." (why must a 'womyn's' title be determined by her marital status while a man was "Mr." regardless?). Sigh.

In retrospect, I don't think that being PC was a bad thing. It's just that I seemed to have lost sight of the real cause. Yes, it was important to me then (and still is now) that a woman retains her title and identity on the basis of who she is and not to whom she is or is not married. However, to argue and plead with the masses over how "womyn" should be spelled (which I adamantly did for a year) does not do anything to bring all women closer to becoming fully accomplished, strong and independent.

It wasn't quite PC either, when I got the typical "No, where are you really from?" question (which meant, "Your skin colour places you...*where* on the map?"). It peeved me that being 'Canadian' couldn't be just that. I always needed to explain my "origins" and answering: "Well, I was born in England if that's what you mean," did not really help friendly inquirers. My policy was to dodge the question so much that the questioner either got fed up and left it at "Canadian," or fell in to the bluntness trap where I could then scream racism.

Then a friend told me that my constant declaration of my Canadian-ness and refusal to unveil my ethnic background produced the notion that I was ashamed of my Indian heritage. In fact, I was merely trying to illustrate that "Canadian" should be a sufficient response. But I was so gung-ho on scaring them to see the point, I don't think "they" even saw the point.

But now the question doesn't come up too often. We, as a society, have become incredibly politically correct. Granted we don't go around calling eggs "stolen non-human animal products"—the actual PC term—but there is a certain amount of "sensitive issues" that we tiptoe around. We've become incredibly scared to say many things. Jaws wide shut.

I found that the more I became sensitive to these and hundreds of other issues, the less my point was getting through. And my idealistic point was to help eradicate discrimination of any shape or size from our society.

So we've reached the point where we whisper the ethnic background of a person when we describe them. We talk freely about sensitive issues behind closed doors, but speak in terse sentences in an open forum. By constricting the modes of communication to political correctness, we suffocate the passage of understanding why we strove to be PC in the first place. The reason why political correctness originated was to slowly change society's perception of minority groups. The negative image which arises when we label a person a "midget" or "retarded" generates the stereotypes which we have all worked so hard to erase.

Ah, but my preaching doesn't point to a definite answer. So what shall it be, political correctness... or complete abandonment of all things tight-lipped? I'm confused as to which way to go. What follows is an example of why I can't preach of a clear-cut answer.

A recent conversation with a friend describing a love interest: "He's... well," she says in a whisper. "He's black." She said this, not in the hushed tone as if it were a bad thing, but like it was taboo to mention race when describing a person.

So one can say, "It should be considered taboo. Why is it necessary to bring in colour when describing a PERSON? Colour only describes them skin deep."

This is a good point. But, most people are blessed with the gift of seeing colours (ROYGBIV to be specific). When recognizing a person, one usually identifies the most visible feature. Often, colour is that feature—although we cannot admit that nowadays because it wouldn't be PC. Granted, when I sit down with friends I don't think of where their origination lies, but when identifying a person, colour is often what first comes to mind.

So one could say, "Sounds like you've turned into a racist bigot who sees a person only through colour." This, however, is not what I'm saying. To finish answering the first question, colour does not only go skin-deep. Often it does *signal* certain aspects of a person. Please note that I don't believe that colour defines the person. However, colour often signifies culture, and culture often defines characteristics in people (not stereotypes). Why else do we often see on campus, groups of people together of the same race, culture, or religion? We socialize on the basis of common ground. This can stem from being in the same classes, living in the same residence, or sharing a passion for blue M&M's. Skin colour and ethnic background are often those initial features that we use to understand, trust, or laugh with someone.

The left side of my brain is battling against the right side over what is the "right" way to perceive this political correctness trend. The quest for a politically correct society is valid—a society washed of negative stereotypes sounds wonderful. However, the society that focuses so much on these superficial wounds overlooks the actual people being victimized. The warring factions in my head can't seem to reach a consensus. But I think I'm leaning towards what old uncle Albert Einstein had to say. "Perhaps it is an idle task to judge in times when action counts."